Title of case study: Focus on the Citizen: Establishing an e-government framework

Local Authority/Municipality name: Miami-Dade County

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Summary

Focus on the Citizen

In August, 1999, Miami-Dade County established a new position of Chief Information Officer in order to bring about a cohesive approach to organizational information technology. One of his first tasks was the development of a vision and strategy for IT. (see http://www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/cio/ for more information on this subject). In summary, the CIO identified six main goals:

- Use e-government to expand county hours and service
- Improve county processes
- Improve management of resources
- Make smart, coordinated investments
- Simplify and standardize the environment
- Modernize the network

Key to his approach was the formation of working groups which function as cross organizational teams to assess how strategic technologies can be applied to improve organizational processes.

In May 2000, the Chief Information Officer's Working Group on e-government (e-gov) issued a report of Findings and Recommendations.   This report identified the issues and opportunities faced by the e-gov revolution and made some short-term recommendations about how best to proceed. The work of this committee was endorsed by the Information Technology (IT) Policy Council, the key decision making body within the County's IT Governance model. Several initiatives borne of these recommendations are currently underway.

One of the most important recommendations made was the initiation of a pilot project for the establishment of an e-government environment.

As a result of this, in April 2001, the County launched a new web portal, www.miamidade.gov , unveiling a new design and approach in online service. The portal provides a window into county services and information as well as a consistent look and feel.   Through this window, one can select many online services such as paying a building re-inspection fee, adopting a pet, requesting a county service, renewing a library book or renewing a driver's license. The
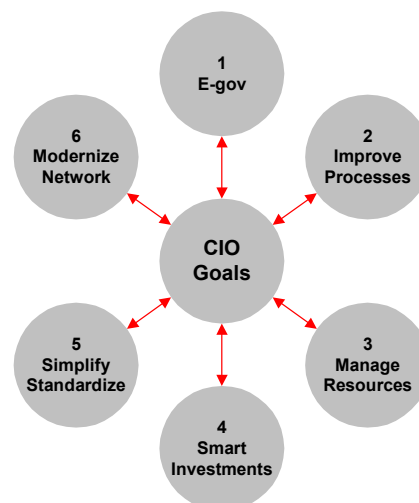
design is intended to locate information within three 'clicks' of the mouse. Moreover, information on the web site is targeted toward specific groups of online customers: residents, visitors, businesses and employees. Each group can easily locate news information that is of most interest to them. Because the portal is service oriented, to provide 'seamless service', one will find links throughout to non-county government services, including those provided by the state and federal governments.

Information on county government continues to grow. Items sponsored by individual County Commissioners can now be found on their web pages. The work of the Charter Review Task Force has been published online, and includes a form that the public can use to email their input. A chart illustrating the structure of government with links to county departments and executive staff is available. An online suggestion box, directed to the County Manager, is available for public input.

The County is using the web portal to provide up to date news and information to the public. Press releases, announcements and meeting notifications are kept current on the portal, serving not only the public, but also employees who are empowered with information about county government. The ability to publish information on the web, and keep it current, has been greatly improved through the use of various techniques, published in the County Web Style Guide, reducing content publication time (and costs) over 75%. The portal is used as a tool for communicating important information regarding the critical drought situation, and more recently severe weather conditions. Live fire rescue dispatch calls from our 911 Computer Aided Dispatch System are available on the web, updated every sixty seconds.

A subscription service available on the web portal allows the public to sign up to receive news and information via email.   Bulletins are regularly sent to the public, and the public is able to select the categories of information in which they are most interested, including emergency advisories, employee announcements and cultural events.

The e-government initiative continues to move transactions to the web. Building re-inspection fees can now be paid on the web, using a credit card, and an approximate 20% of these payments are now made online. Online services to pay a parking ticket and renew an occupational license have been added to the portal. The County is now collecting over $4000 a day in parking citation payments via the web. Planning is underway to identify the next 'wave' of e-government applications, targeting those services that are of greatest benefit to the public.

Case study body: discuss critical success factors

The critical success factors that must be present for a successful e-government environment are the same factors that constitute barriers to success when weak or absent. These critical success factors are the elements necessary to drive the transformation of government.

Miami-Dade County has already developed strength in these key areas, however, the organization must view the transition of government as an on-going process.

Critical Success Factors

Barriers to Success

Leadership	Governance
Competency	Technology
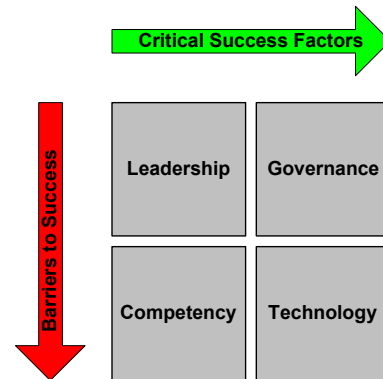
Leadership

Strong leadership is the single most important factor in success. A champion will lead the transformation brought about by e-government, however, all organizational leaders must embrace and nurture this process. County leadership must engage themselves in the following tasks:

- ✓ **Focus on the customer** – Success will be measured by how well the customer *perceives* their needs are being met.
- ✓ **Solve business problems** before applying technology – Business process re-engineering will make the difference between successful projects and failures. In order for this to occur, the business operation must be fully engaged in e-gov initiatives.
- ✓ **Lead by example** – Leadership that is truly passionate about organizational transformation will live the model they preach. This will determine the path of the followership.
- ✓ **Be flexible** – Current models for successful organizations require flexibility. The Container Store, well known for customer service, has a cartoon character mascot known as Gumby®. The appearance of this mascot throughout their organization signifies teamwork and flexibility, and reminds employees to do whatever its takes to serve a customer, help a teammate or complete a task. Gumby is the antithesis of the attitude, "It's not my job".[1]
- ✓ **Produce results along the way** – Demonstrating small wins along the way will garner support for long-term goals.
- ✓ **Encourage continuous learning and innovative thought** – Learning in this framework is not synonymous with training. Exploring information through research and professional development will inspire innovative thinking required for organizational transformation.
- ✓ **Communicate the vision to all stakeholders** – Communication at all levels of the organization on a consistent basis is required. The organization must maintain a clear view of where we are heading and how their individual contributions will help us to get there.
- ✓ **Cultivate an e-culture by sharing information** – Internet technology makes it more possible than ever to make information available to the organization. People who have access to information feel a sense of empowerment and can be more productive.
- ✓ **Maintain a continuous awareness of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats** – As part of the strategic planning process, leadership must be constantly aware of stakeholder perception of county success and failure. External and internal factors can shape the future of the organization.

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[1] Discovering the Soul of Service, Leonard L. Berry, 1999

✓ **Seek out agents of change and empower them to act** – There exists in every organization individuals that have the influence and trust to exact change. Often, these individuals are more powerful change forces than the highest forms of leadership. Miami-Dade County leadership will seek out these individuals and empower them to lead in organizational transformation.

Governance

Governance refers to the organizational models that are adopted in support of e-government and includes structure, roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, funding and financial management.

✓ **Implement a governance model** to serve as a decision making body – The CIO has implemented such a model for the County's overall IT initiatives and this is used to address decisions and policies related to e-gov, as well.

✓ **Implement a measurement process** that extends from the measurement of individual performance to the organization's ability to meet goals and objectives.

✓ **Define an organizational model for e-gov** – Miami-Dade County will establish an organizational model designed to support the e-gov initiative. At the core of this model is ~~will be the~~ an e-government department.

✓ **Establish accountability** as part of the definition of roles and responsibilities. Strategic Action Plans will identify agencies that will take a lead role in ~~carrying forth~~ implementing strategic initiatives.

✓ **Develop funding models in support of e-gov**. Funding approaches have been addressed in the Strategic Action Plan section of this document.

✓ **Implement new models for procurement** – Government practices in the procurement of goods and services pose a significant barrier to the dynamic nature of an e-gov environment. The County will seek new approaches toward procurement while still ensuring that the County maintains a fair and competitive process.

✓ **Secure legislative and legal expertise** – The Internet has introduced a whole new discipline within the legal profession. The County must have access to knowledgeable legal counsel when dealing with the circumstances surrounding this 'brave new world'. Similarly, as previously noted, federal, state and local legislation must be evaluated given the impact of this new environment.

Competencies

Competencies refer to the organization's ability to adapt to change and our ability to respond to this change with the appropriate level of resources. Strong competencies are evidenced in our ability to:

✓ **Adapt to change** – Most employees will acknowledge that government is not fully meeting our organizational goals. And at some level, most employees will acknowledge that changes must take place if we are to improve that situation. Change must be incremental, but must also be rapid, a tough combination. Effective leadership will be key in increasing the organization's ability to adapt to new challenges.

✓ **Manage multiple relationships in support of e-gov initiatives** – The ability to successfully manage an e-gov initiative involves a blend of multiple relationships including business experts, customers, technologists and vendors. It is the project manager's task to synchronize these relationships in order to 'make it happen'.

✓ **Execute implementations in 'internet time'** – Traditionally, large scale IT projects have been undertaken as single threaded, long term initiatives designed to deliver a complete solution. Today's technology solutions are typically delivered within 3 to 6 months and are often incremental implementations. 'Internet time' has changed the way projects are planned, developed and implemented.

✓ **Provide support to the unique demands imposed by the Internet environment** – Government has grown accustomed to providing service primarily during working hours:

5 days a week, 8 hours a day. E-government opens the organization's doors for service on a 24/7 basis. This requires the organization to rethink its operational and technical environment to adapt to new demands.

✓ **Secure the necessary resources, forming and dissolving project teams as new initiatives are undertaken**. A new model for tackling initiatives is required. As discussed in the strategy section of this plan, this model will call for organizational relationships that are new to government.

Technologies

At the core of the Information Age is technology. Without technology to deliver the promise of e-government, there can be no product. Moreover, providing inaccurate information is worse than providing no information at all. Therefore, successful e-governments will employ a technology infrastructure that is designed be reliable, accurate and scalable.

The good news for governments like Miami-Dade County is that IT organizations are accustomed to managing infrastructure at a large scale. IT departments are aware of the requirements for reliable and accurate information. They have been operating systems on a 24/7 basis for years. The challenge comes, however, in embracing new perspectives of external awareness, flexibility and rapid delivery. These are some of the key points to be tackled in the area of competencies, as discussed above.

Miami-Dade County will address the following issues in establishing a technology framework to support the e-government environment:

✓ **Develop a comprehensive plan to web enable information that now lies in disparate computer systems throughout the County** – The County's technology assets are dispersed throughout county agencies and involve the use of various software and hardware components. It is estimated that there are as many resources dispersed in county departments as there are in the central IT shop. Placing appropriate public records on the web is a key goal for Miami-Dade County and in order to make this happen, the County must develop a plan to overcome the complexities that arise from the current environment.
✓ **Develop standards across the enterprise** – Technology standards will allow the County to achieve cost savings in the procurement of hardware and software. More importantly, standards will allow the County to deliver online services more rapidly and with greater value to the public.
✓ **Assess options for sourcing vs in-house hosting of web services** – Each project that is undertaken in the e-gov arena will be evaluated to determine the most appropriate method of delivery, whether the system be developed using in-house resources, or outsourced to a business partner under county project management. These decisions will be made as part of a structured approach to systems development, taking into account factors such as cost, resources, expertise with new technologies and the availability of off the shelf software that can meet the County's needs.
✓ **Develop the skills and talents of in-house technology resources** – It is very difficult in today's technology environment to maintain a full set of resources that are adequately trained in the various areas of hardware and software. The County will develop a plan to focus on what is considered to be technology core competencies and ensure that an adequate level of training and skill development is provided to staff. Critical to the success of e-gov is the County's ability to manage technology projects. The Office of the CIO will establish a training program for project managers and will establish mentoring relationships between trained project managers and county staff.
✓ **Build an application and network architecture that is scalable, reliable, secure and flexible to meet the growing needs of e-gov**
✓ **Develop a technical support infrastructure that supports the County's initiatives for Customer Relationship Management** – In order for the County to adequately support the e-customer, the County must develop a technical support infrastructure to

rapidly address technical problems as they occur. Key to success in this area is the implementation of network monitoring tools that will allow the County to respond to problems before the public is even aware that they exist.

- ✓ **Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery and crisis management plan** – The ability to develop a disaster recovery and crisis management plan was proven during the Y2K era. Like most large organizations, the County took an organizational approach to this situation and developed plans for disaster recovery/business continuity and crisis management. The County should apply the experience gained during Y2K in the development of such a plan for the online environment.

# Main conclusions/implications

The move toward electronic government has brought about a call for change within county government. In order to present information on the portal, one must view and ~~organization~~ organize information by services, rather than organizational structure. As such, we have been forced to examine organizational structure and from this inefficiencies in current processes begin to emerge.
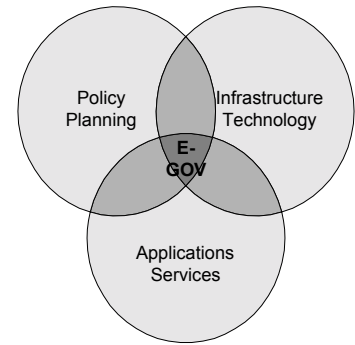
Top leaders in county government recognize the importance of e-government and acknowledge that a reinvention of government will be brought about as a result of its successful implementation. It is held that e-government is a key enabling strategy to achieve the goals and objectives of county government.

The leadership of Miami-Dade County also recognizes that in order for a transformation of government to occur, the organization must change in many ways. We must examine our current organizational models and implement new ways in which departments can work together to better serve the public. This does not necessarily mean that e-government requires significant changes to the existing organizational structure, but rather it necessitates new and unique relationships across the organization, some of which are unfamiliar to the traditional culture of government:

- Cross-functional teams
- Matrix management
- Enterprise-wide planning and leadership
- Collaboration across 'organizational boundaries'
- Informal leaders and 'change agents'
- Professional project management skills
- Performance Measurement – individual and organizational
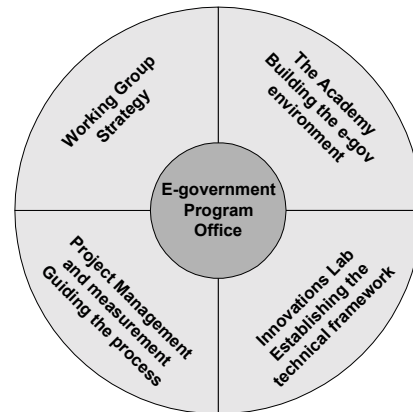
To facilitate this new approach, the CIO will establish an e-government department, employing the methods listed above, to work across the enterprise and lead the County in a transformation of service delivery and operation through the use of technology. Through collaboration and innovation, this office will work with county staff at all levels to achieve the vision.

This office will work collaboratively in four areas:

- **E-government Working Group** – The e-gov department will provide staff support to the on-going efforts of the Working Group in forming policy recommendations that will be presented through the governance model. This group will focus on the Strategic Action Plan in the area of Policy and Planning. In addition, the Working Group will provide guidance and oversight to the strategic planning process.

- **Program Management and measurement** – will provide professional project management to countywide e-gov initiatives, particularly those identified in the Strategic Action Plan in the areas of Applications and Infrastructure projects. Will assist project sponsors in the development and analysis of service levels and performance measurements.

- **The Academy** - a classroom/lab environment in which developers build a complete business application including workflow, e-commerce, digital signatures, database access, legacy system interfaces, archive, audit, data sharing and other elements. The Academy will standardize and publish the decided approach so that departments can achieve rapid development of consistent, reliable, and auditable applications for the e-government environment.

- **The Innovations Lab** – will provide research and analysis for strategic and emerging technologies to determine the tools and technologies that will be adopted as enterprise standards. The Innovations Lab will coordinate the involvement of technical expertise required by county staff as well as vendors and research resources.

- **Online Services** – The eCounty's web portal, miamidade.gov, will continue to grow in information and service. A centralized portal is in place and technologies and processes will be implemented to support decentralized publication of content.

The e-gov department will be staffed with a core group of individuals, while other individuals throughout the organization will be assigned to the office on a project/initiative basis.